In the Claims:

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions:

1. (Original) A method for determining polarisation of an electrode of a VRLA battery, the method including the steps of: allowing the battery to discharge for a selected period of time, monitoring the battery voltage during the selected period, and from the change in voltage over the selected period, determining the polarisation of the electrode.

2. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1 including detecting the magnitude of the change in voltage to determine the polarisation of the electrode.

3. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 1 including the step of detecting a first change in battery voltage and a subsequent second change in battery voltage, and associating the first change with polarisation of a negative electrode and the second change with polarisation of a positive electrode.

4. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 3 including comparing the polarisation of at least one electrode with an expected polarisation value or range of polarisation values to determine parameters of a float charge to be applied to the battery.

5. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the step of discharging comprises open circuit charge leakage.

6. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the step of discharging comprises closed circuit enforced discharging.

7. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the step of discharging occurs as part of a current perturbation applied to the battery.

8. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 7 wherein the polarisation of the negative electrode is determined.

9. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1 further including the step of using the difference between the battery voltage prior to discharge and the polarisation detected to determine the polarisation of the other electrode.

10. (Original) A method of providing a float charge to a VRLA battery, the method including the steps of: allowing the battery to discharge for a selected period of time, monitoring the battery voltage during the selected period, and applying a float charge to the battery dependent on the change in battery voltage over the selected period.

11. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 10 wherein the step of discharging comprises open circuit charge leakage.

12. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 10 wherein the step of discharging comprises closed circuit enforced discharging.

13. (Original) A method of providing a float charge to a VRLA cell, the method including the steps of: determining the peak Tafel equivalent resistance for the cell and applying a voltage to the cell electrodes dependent on the determined equivalent resistance.

14. – 18. (Canceled)